

Re: S.B. 284: AN ACT INCREASING THE AGE FROM EIGHT TO EIGHTEEN FOR ANY INCOME-ELIGIBLE PERSON TO OBTAIN MEDICAL ASSISTANCE REGARDLESS OF IMMIGRATION STATUS

Dear Members of the Human Services Committee of the Connecticut General Assembly:

My name is Kathleen Emily Powers. I am a resident of West Hartford, a former teacher [Bristol Central High School and Wesleyan University], and a descendant of immigrants.

I stand in support of S.B. 284: AN ACT INCREASING THE AGE FROM EIGHT TO EIGHTEEN FOR ANY INCOME-ELIGIBLE PERSON TO OBTAIN MEDICAL ASSISTANCE REGARDLESS OF IMMIGRATION STATUS. Expanding HUSKY through age eighteen would guarantee a healthier school population and since well students generally perform at higher levels, S.B. 284 would improve Connecticut's future workforce. Beyond eighteen year olds, if we want a healthier population that will save state tax dollars in the future, we need to open access to HUSKY healthcare to immigrants of all ages. But S.B. 284 is a start.

When people lack healthcare, small problems that go without treatment can become large. An immigrant student of mine suffered from an untreated UTI (urinary tract Infection) for fourteen days because she couldn't afford medical care. What could have been cured by an inexpensive antibiotic became a serious kidney condition. Access to healthcare would have averted the problem. Another, who had a series of ear infections, finally went to the emergency room when her eardrum burst. Early treatment would have had a much lower personal and monetary cost.

S.B.284 offers a humane solution that reduces emergencies like these, and in the long run lowers health care costs while boosting the state's revenue by increasing the health of a future workforce—and that future is very close. I ask the committee to support and pass this legislation, and in the future to work toward opening access to all immigrants regardless of age.

Thank you for your serious consideration of this crucial issue.

Kathleen Emily Powers, Ph.D.